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## STUDENTS' DIFFERENCES AND THEIR OUTCOMES IN ENGLISH LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate the students' differences and students' outcomes in English learning at State Vocational High School 3 (SMKN 3) Purwokerto, Central Java. The samples were second graders at that school. They were 177 fifteen to nineteen year old students. The results indicated that the students' both English learning motivation and English language anxiety were at moderate level. There was significant negative relationship between motivation and outcome, but positive correlation between students' anxiety and outcome was indicated. It showed that although the students' anxiety was high, their learning outcome was still good.

**Keywords:** language anxiety, learning motivation, outcomes, students' differences

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### INTRODUCTION

In learning English, non-native speaker students meet difficulties in mastering that particular language. The students' outcomes in learning English can be affected not only by cognitive factors but also by affective ones. This paper discusses students' differences that influence their outcomes; they are English learning motivation and English language anxiety. Both of them play an important role in students' classroom performance.

Many studies related to English learning motivation and student's outcome have been conducted by many educators, language teachers, experts in education and researchers. They have been interested in the phenomenon of foreign language learning motivation for a number of years (Gardner,

1985; Hashimoto, 2002; Gao & Zhao, 2003; Gao et al., 2004; König, 2006; Gao et al., 2007; Honggang, 2008; Huang, 2008; Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010; and Moivaziri, 2010).

In one study of 255 students at Islamic Azad University, Technological faculty and Payame Noor University in Iran, Moivaziri (2010) probed the motivational orientations of Iranian university students. The findings presented a picture which established that Iranian university students were both instrumentally and integratively oriented. This provided a sufficient answer to the research questions addressed, and contradicted the opinion of some researchers who believed that in a foreign language situation students were instrumentally oriented. It was also shown that the students

were highly motivated towards learning English.

König (2006) indicated that the motivation of Turkish University students to learn the foreign language was in general very high. The respondents reported that they enjoyed learning the foreign language and liked to use it both in the classroom and outside. The students thought that English had a positive effect on learning the foreign language. They planned to reach an advanced level of proficiency in the foreign language. They described a person who voluntarily learned a foreign language as being motivated, hard-working, social, open-minded, etc. which are all positive personality attributes. They considered the knowledge of a foreign language is necessary in order for them to be successful in professional life in Turkey.

The studies show the level and reasons of student's motivation in learning a second language. Most of the results of such studies showed that there was a positive correlation between students' motivation and their outcome in learning the foreign language. That is, students with high motivation tend to gain high outcome; on the contrary, students with low motivation gain low outcome.

In addition, another factor was pointed out by Elkhafaifi (2005), quoting Horwitz et al. (1986), that anxiety played an important role in determining the students' success or failure in foreign language classes. Students' anxiety negatively influences their outcome in language learning.

Anxiety is a problem for many foreign language students. There are many studies connected with anxiety and students' outcome (Horwitz et al., 1986; Price, 1988; Aida, 1994; Cassado & Dereshiwsky, 2001;

Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Daley, 2003; Wörde, 2003; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Woodrow, 2006; Na, 2007). The results showed that foreign language anxiety was negatively correlated to outcome (i.e. final grade, listening and speaking performance, and production of vocabulary). Students with high anxiety gain low outcome; on the contrary, those with low anxiety gain high outcome.

Na (2007) surveyed and analyzed 115 students (56 males and 59 females) from a high school in Shandong Province, China. The results of the relationship analysis indicated that anxiety and English outcome were only correlated in terms of test anxiety, and they were negatively correlated. It was found that anxiety of English classes indeed significantly affected high school students' English outcome. Woodrow (2006) conducted a research on 275 (139male and 136female) students in several Australian universities. She found significant relationship between second language speaking anxiety and oral performance. And Wörde (2003) conducted a study of 15 students from a diverse set of language classroom (French, German, and Spanish). She found a significant negative correlation between the final foreign language grades and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale score.

Based on the above findings, the writer conducted a study that focuses on learning differences in Indonesia EFL context to find out whether the same findings also exist in Purwokerto, Indonesia. Based on the early observation and information from an English teacher at Vocational High School 3 (SMKN 3) Purwokerto. It was assumed that there was an indication that the level of English learning motivation and language

anxiety influenced the students' outcomes. The study included in the category of correlational research. It was to investigate the relationship among the variables (English learning motivation, language anxiety and students' outcomes). Descriptive-quantitative survey research was used in this study in which statistical analysis was the main analytical technique.

## METHODOLOGY

The population was students at State Vocational High School 3 (SMKN 3) Purwokerto, Central Java. The writer determined this school as population because it was assumed that the students had low English learning motivation and high language anxiety. This study used random sampling technique. There were 177 samples consisted of fifteen to nineteen year-old students.

In this study, the writer used a questionnaire as instrument. The questionnaire consists of three parts; the background of the students in Part A which includes name, class/department, age, gender, parents' occupation, and informal education, Part B is the Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) based on the socio-educational model adapted by Gao & Zhao (2003). Part C is the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The questionnaire was translated into *Bahasa Indonesia* to make it easy for the students to understand.

Adaptations of the AMTB have been used in many studies of second language learning motivation (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Hashimoto, 2002; Gao & Zhao, 2003; Gao et al., 2004; König, 2006; Gao et al., 2007; Honggang, 2008; Huang, 2008; Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010; and Moivaziri, 2010).

There were two main variables in this study namely the dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable, students' outcomes, was taken from the students' final semester examination scores. The first independent variable, the students' motivation was measured by the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). AMTB tests on the seven types of motivation i.e. Intrinsic interest, Immediate achievement, Learning situation, Going abroad, Social responsibility, Individual development, and Information medium. It was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from strongly agree (coded 1) to strongly disagree (coded 5). According to Gao & Zhao (2003), the reliability of the questionnaire measured by Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire is 0.84. The questionnaire survey consisted of 30 questions: Six items to measure students' intrinsic interest; 5 items to measure immediate achievement; 5 item to measure learning situation; four items to measure going abroad; three items to measure social responsibility' 5 items to measure individual development; and two items to measure information medium (See Gao et al., 2007).

The second independent variable, the students' anxiety was measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). FLCAS tested on three dimensions which are the students' communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (see Horwitz, 1986; Horwitz, 2001). It was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from strongly agree (coded 1) to strongly disagree (coded 5). The questionnaire survey consisted of 33 questions. It consisted of positive and negative sentences: 15 items were to

measure students' communication apprehension; 9 items were to measure students' fear of negative evaluation; 9 items were to measure students' test anxiety.

However, the questionnaire was translated into *Bahasa Indonesia* for AMTB and using the back-translation procedure for FLCAS in order to avoid the difficulties and misunderstanding. The help of an English lecturer who is also proficient in *Bahasa Indonesia* was recruited to provide the Indonesian translation and back-translation by an English teacher to ensure content validity. Distribution of questionnaire was conducted before final semester examination and data of final examination scores was obtained after examination.

Then, the English learning motivation and language anxiety data were analyzed by firstly determining the Mean score. The Mean score for students' English outcomes was also determined. The next was determining the categories of English learning motivation level, language anxiety level and students' outcomes. Categorization of English learning motivation level was by placing the Mean score to the sequences 1-1.5 (very low), 1.6-2.5 (low), 2.6-3.5 (moderate), 3.6-4.5 (high), and 4.6-5 (very high). Categorization of language anxiety level was by placing the Mean score to the sequences 1-1.5 (very high), 1.6-2.5 (high), 2.6-3.5 (moderate), 3.6-4.5 (low), and 4.6-5 (very low). And categorization of students' outcomes was by placing the Mean score to the sequences 2-3 (very low), 3.1-4 (low), 4.1-5 (moderate), 5.1-6 (high), and 6.1-7 (very high). Then it determined the correlation between English learning motivation and students' outcomes as well as the correlation between language anxiety

and students' outcomes in English as a foreign language.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Students' demography**

In this study, the students' demography showed that students' average age was sixteen years; there were 129 students (72.9%) in this age level. Their ages were 15 up to 19 years. 168 male students (94.9%) and 9 female students (5.1%). Father's occupation was dominated by entrepreneur sector 67 people (37.9%) and labourer 39 people (22%). Mother's occupation was dominated by housewife 113 people (63.8%). And 34 students (19.2%) used to take or were still taking English course while 143 students (80.8%) had never taken any English course.

### **The level of students' English learning motivation**

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the types of motivation used in this study. It indicates that all of the values for the types measured in Likert Scale were around their midpoint with a standard deviation below 1. As for types measured using 5 point Likert scale, learning situation ( $\mu=3.12$  and  $s.d=0.66$ ) was recorded as the highest rating, followed by intrinsic interest ( $\mu=2.83$  and  $s.d=0.57$ ). Immediate achievement showed  $\mu=2.67$  and  $s.d=0.56$ . Going abroad showed  $\mu=2.62$  and  $s.d=0.62$ . Social responsibility showed  $\mu=2.44$  and  $s.d=0.74$ . Information medium showed  $\mu=2.39$  and  $s.d=0.84$ . Individual development was recorded as the lowest rating  $\mu=2.15$  and  $s.d=0.70$ . And Overall motivation showed  $\mu=2.64$  and  $s.d=0.42$ . From the data, within the possible range of scores 2.6 up to 3.5, it

can be inferred that the students' motivation was at moderate level.

***Table 1. English Learning Motivation: Mean ratings and standard deviations***

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Overall motivation	1.60	3.80	2.6367	.42394	177
Intrinsic interest	1.30	4.00	2.8316	.57447	177
Immediate achievement	1.20	4.00	2.6678	.56481	177
Learning situation	1.60	4.60	3.1232	.66433	177
Going abroad	1.30	4.00	2.6226	.61722	177
Social responsibility	1.00	4.30	2.4384	.73931	177
Individual development	1.00	4.00	2.1525	.70518	177
Information medium	1.00	4.00	2.3898	.83972	177

From the data obtained, the students were most motivated to learn English because of aspects of the learning environment including the quality of teaching, teaching materials, teachers, and affiliation with the learning groups (Learning situation). Next, the students' motivation were intrinsic interest, they interested to learn English because of their love on that particular language and certain aspects of its culture. As the immediate achievement, the students learned English because of the target for high test scores, high scores in university entrance examination, or learning the target language to obtain satisfactory scores in examination and a bachelor's degree. These reminded us of certificate motivation. Going abroad was the next students' motivations; it is to learn English for going abroad for various purposes such as seeking better education or job opportunities, experiencing English speaking culture and immigration. Then as social responsibility, the students motivated to combine harmonizing the family and putting the country in order, indicating an individual's responsibility to fulfill social expectations. The next was information

medium. They desired to learn English to obtain information and learn other academic subjects. The content in this category exhibited a tendency of viewing English learning as a means to obtain information of various kinds, whether it was related to other subjects, or general development of world economy, science and technology. The students were least motivated about individual development, the students desired learning English to increase one's own ability and social status in future development. It was pointed to the practical value of English as an instrument for communication, job opportunity, and life in general; finding a good job and a sense of achievement. Within the seven types of English learning motivation, the students were most motivated about learning situation and least motivated about individual development.

The discussion for the results can be explored in two factors; internal and external factors. The internal factor is closely related with the students themselves: they probably did feel very motivated in English as a foreign language classroom because they liked the teachers, the quality of used

books/materials, the quality of language classes, and classmates. All of these items were assumed to be able influence the students' English learning motivation.

Good relationship with classmates is assumed as one factor that can increase the motivation. Classmates' favorable characteristics most likely enabled the students to get well along with them, which seems to have contributed to students' English class with a good atmosphere. Therefore, the students would be more motivated by the conducive atmosphere.

An external factor that could explain the results is parents' occupation. Kwong (1983) stated that parents' occupation influenced a child's educational opportunities because it determined the area of residences and thus the quality of the school. Office workers' children had more opportunities than the peasants' with better educational facilities in the cities, and the children of intellectuals out-perform all others with their additional support from home. In this study, the majority of students' parents' occupation was entrepreneurs, and it determined where they lived, which is urban area. This factor was expected influencing the parents' thinking pattern, they felt necessary to send their sons and daughters to the qualified school which is good in skills and foreign language. This could have given positive effect to them and it would influence the students' English learning in the school. Therefore, the students in this school were

motivated to obtain the particular skill in vocational education and language, i.e. English skill.

A second external factor is the role of teacher. It was possible that English teachers at State Vocational High School 3 (SMKN 3) Purwokerto always encouraged the students to practice their English both in and out the classroom. Moreover, they were able to create a lively climate in the classroom. Teachers' characteristics or attitudes such as being helpful and encouraging could have played an important role in motivating students' motivation at State Vocational High School 3 (SMKN 3) Purwokerto, Central Java.

#### **The level of students' language anxiety**

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the dimensions used in this study. It indicates that all of the values for dimensions measured in Likert Scale were around their midpoint with a standard deviation below 1. As for dimensions measured using 5 point Likert scale, fear of negative evaluation ( $\mu=2.81$  and  $s.d=0.58$ ) was recorded as the highest rating, followed by test anxiety ( $\mu=2.75$  and  $s.d=0.49$ ). Communication apprehension was recorded as the lowest mean rating ( $\mu=2.63$  and  $s.d=0.42$ ). And overall anxiety showed  $\mu=2.75$  and  $s.d=0.44$ . From the data, within the possible range of scores 2.6 up to 3.5, it can be inferred that the students' anxiety was at moderate level.

**Table 2. Foreign language anxiety: Mean ratings and standard deviations**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Overall Anxiety	1.80	4.30	2.7147	.43603	177
Communication Apprehension	1.40	4.10	2.6328	.42286	177
Fear of Negative Evaluation	1.80	4.60	2.8141	.57827	177
Test Anxiety	1.60	4.40	2.7458	.48734	177

Within the three sub dimensions of language anxiety, the students were comparatively most anxious about communication, followed by taking test. They were least worried about negative evaluation.

The discussion for the results can be explored in two factors; internal factor and external factors. The internal factor is closely related with the students themselves: they probably did not feel very anxious in English as a foreign language classroom because they felt that they were in the same level both in English level and age. Wachidah (2004) suggested that studying with peers would not make students feel ashamed and clumsy to speak English because they only faced their friends. So it influenced their self confidence positively. The more confident a learner feels, the less anxiety he experiences in learning (Meng & Wang, 2006).

Good relationship with classmates is assumed as one factor that can reduce the anxiety. Classmates' favorable characteristics most likely enabled the students to get well along with them, which seems to have contributed to students' English class with a good atmosphere. Therefore, the atmosphere in the class would be more relaxed, not stressful.

An external factor is the role of teacher. It was possible that English teachers at State Vocational High School 3 (SMKN 3) Purwokerto were able to create a lively climate in the classroom, therefore, able to make the learning context less stressful. Teachers could help students cope with anxiety-producing situations and made the learning context less stressful (Horwitz et al., 1986; Price, 1988; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Aida, 1994; Cassado & Dereshiwsky,

2001; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Daley, 2003; Wörde, 2003; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Meng & Wang, 2006; Woodrow, 2006; Na, 2007). Teachers' characteristics or attitudes such as being helpful and encouraging could have played an important role in reducing students' anxiety at the State Vocational High School 3 (SMKN 3) Purwokerto classrooms.

In terms of communication apprehension that was recorded as the highest rating, it is assumed that the students did not participate in conversations, just smiling and politely nodding, or listening to others talk. Students with this kind of anxiety sat passively in the classroom; they did not take a part in classroom activities that actually could improve their language skills.

#### **The correlation among English learning motivation, language anxiety and students' outcomes**

The correlation between overall English learning motivation types and students' outcomes showed significant negative correlation as a whole  $r=-0.209$ ,  $p<0.01$ . A negative correlation was seen between intrinsic interest and students' outcomes  $r=-0.339$ ,  $p<0.01$ , significant. The correlations between learning outcomes and four motivation types (i.e. immediate achievement, learning situation, going abroad, and social responsibility) are not significant. A negative correlation was seen between individual development and students' outcomes  $r=-0.283$ ,  $p<0.01$ , significant. A negative correlation was seen between information medium and students' outcomes  $r=-0.222$ ,  $p<0.01$ , significant.

Although there were two motivation types showing the positive correlation to students' outcomes, and the possibilities

were higher than 0.01, as a whole, between overall English learning motivation and

students' outcomes correlated significantly at  $p < 0.01$  level.

**Table 3. Pearson correlations between English learning motivation and students' outcomes.**

	Scores	Overall Motivation	II	IA	LS	GA	SR	ID	IM
Scores	r	1							
	P	.							
Overall Motivation	R	-.209(**)	1						
	P	.005	.						
II	R	-.339(**)	.656(**)	1					
	P	.000	.000	.					
IA	R	.098	.524(**)	.030	1				
	P	.193	.000	.694	.				
LS	R	.089	.458(**)	.053	.297(**)	1			
	P	.239	.000	.482	.000	.			
GA	R	-.109	.681(**)	.436(**)	.281(**)	.134	1		
	P	.148	.000	.000	.000	.076	.		
SR	R	-.145	.735(**)	.432(**)	.284(**)	.191(*)	.502(**)	1	
	P	.054	.000	.000	.000	.011	.000	.	
ID	R	-.283(**)	.822(**)	.535(**)	.283(**)	.159(*)	.499(**)	.589(**)	1
	P	.000	.000	.000	.000	.035	.000	.000	.
IM	R	-.222(**)	.643(**)	.401(**)	.181(*)	.069	.336(**)	.475(**)	.677(**)
	P	.003	.000	.000	.016	.360	.000	.000	.

From the data, there was significant relationship between English learning motivation types and students' outcomes in English as a foreign language as a whole. But it should be noted that there were not significant correlations among immediate achievement, learning situation, going abroad, social responsibility and students' outcomes.

In this study, the positive correlation between immediate achievement and students' outcomes, and learning situation and students' outcomes supported the previous studies that English learning motivation would influence the outcome

positively, which is, the higher the motivation, the higher the outcome (Gardner, 1985; Hashimoto, 2002; Gao & Zhao, 2003; Gao et al., 2004; König, 2006; Gao et al., 2007; Honggang, 2008; Huang, 2008; Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010; and Moiiinvaziri, 2010).

However, in general, this study indicated these vocational high school students indeed had low motivation in their English classrooms but they still had good outcomes. It could be showed by the negative relationship between two variables, it meant that the lower the motivation, the higher the outcome.



**Table 4. Pearson correlations between language anxiety and students' outcomes.**

	Scores	Overall Anxiety	CA	FNE	TA	
Scores	r	1				
	p	.				
Overall Anxiety	r	.396(**)	1			
	p	.000	.			
CA	r	.312(**)	.914(**)	1		
	p	.000	.000	.		
FNE	r	.497(**)	.880(**)	.687(**)	1	
	p	.000	.000	.000	.	
TA	r	.280(**)	.881(**)	.722(**)	.700(**)	1
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between language anxiety and students' outcomes showed significant positive correlation as a whole  $r=0.396$ ,  $p<0.01$ . A significant positive correlation was seen between communication apprehension and students' outcomes  $r=0.312$ ,  $p<0.01$ . A significant positive correlation was also seen between fear of negative evaluation and students' outcomes  $r=0.497$ ,  $p<0.01$ . And a significant positive correlation was also seen between test anxiety and students' outcomes  $r=0.280$ ,  $p<0.01$ .

These three dimensions showed the positive correlation to students' outcomes, the possibility were lower than 0.01, which means correlated significantly or there was correlation among communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety and students' outcomes. As a whole, between overall anxiety and students' outcomes, the correlation was significant at  $p<0.01$  level. Therefore, it could be concluded that there was significant relationship between language

anxiety and students' outcomes in English as a foreign language as a whole.

In this study, the significant positive correlation between language anxiety and students' outcomes did not support the previous studies that concluded anxiety would influence the achievement, which is, the higher the anxiety, the lower the outcome (Horwitz et al., 1986; Price, 1988; Aida, 1994; Cassado & Dereshiwsky, 2001; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Daley, 2003; Wörde, 2003; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Woodrow, 2006; Na, 2007). The results of this study indicated these vocational high school students indeed had feeling of anxiety in their English classrooms but they still had good outcomes. It could be showed from the positive relationship between two variables, it meant that the higher the anxiety, the higher the outcome.

One possible explanation for these results might lie in the students' English learning orientation. There are two orientations in learning English; integrative or instrumental orientations (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). Most students in

Indonesia, studying English as foreign language, which is as a compulsory lesson, were for passing the examinations. It indicated that studying English had instrumental orientation. Compared with the students live in the countries where the English is as their second language, they study English for interaction out of the classroom. Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) demonstrated that reasons for studying a second language form a number of difference factors in addition to the integrative and instrumental ones, depending upon the nature of the community and the language concerned. It is obvious that community in Indonesia, especially in Purwokerto where the study was conducted, English is as foreign language and the purpose of learning English is for passing the examinations.

Connected with the result of this study, which is, motivation and anxiety did not influence students' outcomes, it was assumed that because students' orientation in learning English were passing the English examinations. They tended to feel not motivated but anxious, because of the National Examination, in which, all students will pass the exam totally because there is a systematical deceitfulness. Therefore their motivation and anxiety did not affect their outcomes. From this negative phenomenon, all teachers intuitively felt that there is a great mistake in our education, so the effects can be seen from most students' disawareness to the lessons and students' unrespect to the educators. It is recommended that teachers inform and advise them to study English for not only passing the exam but also enhancing life

skill. Accordingly, it is hoped that it can reduce the students' anxiety and increase their motivation to study English for their needs themselves in their development.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study indicated that the students' learning motivation and language anxiety in learning English as foreign language at second grade State Vocational High School 3 (SMKN 3) Purwokerto were at moderate level. From the data obtained, the students were most motivated in learning situation, intrinsic interest, immediate achievement, going abroad, social responsibility, information medium, and the students were least motivated in individual development. Within the three sub dimensions of language anxiety, the students were comparatively most anxious about negative evaluation, followed by taking test. And they were least worried about communication.

This study indicated these vocational high school students indeed had low motivation in their English classrooms but they still had good outcomes. It could be showed by the significant negative relationship between two variables, it meant that the lower the motivation, the higher the outcome. In addition, there was significant positive relationship between language anxiety and students' outcomes in English as a foreign language. They felt anxious but they still had good outcomes. It could be showed by the positive relationship between those variables, it meant that the higher the anxiety, the higher the outcome.

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